Electing an emperor and the killing of democracy.

It is nauseating to watch Trump's rambles - and maybe even more nauseating to watch other Presidents and Prime Ministers grovel in front of him. With you, I am sickened to the core. The confluence of political power with unabashed business avarice is at a pinnacle seldom reached before. And US citizenry, those who don't applaud him, seems totally unprepared to see what their President will dump them and the world into. It is mind-blowing. The biggest threat we face today is a third world war, bumbled into by Trump and the un-accountable democracy we used to be educated, would be our panacea; in SA and elsewhere. It is incredibly stupid but predictable: first they rush with their capital to China et al to build things because the labour is cheap and, as soon as China start making things themselves, the US plan war against them. The coming century will be evil - like the Roman Empire, the US empire will cause devastation wanting to prolong their reign. The Democrats have as much to answer for as the Republicans, the system Chris Hedges calls 'legalized bribery'.

But, my heart beats for South Africa, and I see terrible problems ahead, principally because of the disgrace of ANC rule; the very ANC I once supported and went into battle with. The fault lines go back further than the 30 years since you dumped the people in whose name you said you fought! You, the ANC elite, will be remembered for your greed, big man ego syndrome, poor leadership, and atrocious administration. If there is one lesson for the next generation: only trust those who despise riches, privilege, glamour for they are less likely to be corrupt.

Far better than I can articulate the ANC failure, Seako Masibi recently wrote:

"There comes a time in a nation's life when even the educated must admit defeat — not because they have failed, but because the system rewards failure.

That dejected look on General Mkhwanazi's face captured that exact moment — when competence meets political deployment, and logic meets the stupidity of power.

Here is a man with a BTech in Policing, an MBA, an LLB, a National Diploma in Police Administration, and is an admitted attorney of the High Court — forced to answer questions from a Parliament that confuses noise for intellect.

What we saw in that room was not governance. It was a performance — a theatre of mediocrity sponsored by the taxpayer.

This is the crisis of Africa — not lack of education, not lack of talent — but the deliberate exclusion of capable minds from positions of influence.

Political deployment has become the new apartheid — it separates the loyal from the qualified. It replaces thinkers with followers and silences those who still believe in merit.

In such a country, education no longer inspires. It humiliates.

Because the child in the township sees the truth:
that the man who read all the books sits jobless,
while the one who shouts the loudest slogan drives a government car.

When young people see that power is gained through party loyalty, not through knowledge,
they lose faith in school.
They drop out, not because they are lazy,
but because the system has made ignorance profitable.

How do you convince a young girl in Limpopo to finish matric
when she sees her councilor can't spell "governance" yet controls millions in municipal funds?
How do you tell a boy in Mahikeng to study electrical engineering
when the tender for electricity is awarded to a DJ?

That is the economic collapse we refuse to measure —
the destruction of faith in education.
It's not just corruption of money — it's corruption of purpose.

The economy doesn't collapse because of lack of minerals or investors.
It collapses because of mental poverty — the kind that makes a leader think a slogan can build a road, or that a struggle song can replace sound fiscal management.

Africa's tragedy is not that we are poor.
It's that we are mismanaged.
We export gold and import poverty.
We have diamonds under our feet and debt over our heads.
We send our best engineers abroad, while we appoint cousins to build bridges that collapse before the ribbon is cut.

Political deployment has turned public service into personal service.
Institutions are no longer centers of excellence — they are shelters for the connected."

The worst of **the ANC legacy** is that you have created the space for reactionary nationalistic demagogic forces: The hapless MK party, the EFF, and now emboldened White Afrikaner nationalism, speak white racism, to once more assert itself; assisted by Trump and his whites-only world view.

But, - I am not bowed. Nor do I condemn all and everything. There were always good people, sound principles and incredibly selfless individuals - yes also in the ANC. The one lesson from our history, that stands out at this moment, that is pertinent, speaks to the genocide, treachery and humiliation of the Palestinian people perpetrated by Israel and its enablers, the USA and much of Europe.

Non-racial and secular.

The Freedom Charter adopted in Sophiatown at the Congress of the People in 1955 proclaimed that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it". This was said despite the impact slavery, colonial occupation and Apartheid had on the majority indigenous people. Our struggle was conducted, in combat, in civil resistances, and in the pursuit civil society that did not let colour or race define ourselves. Our Constitution enshrines this. We did not replace one race pursuit with another. This has deepest implications.

Before I further define what non-racialism gave to us, let me reflect on the goal of an all-embracing common humanity. Some like to argue that Robert Sobukwe was the counter to this ANC fundamental, but in the longer view Sobukwe believed all people to be equal. His issue was over the tactics in the face of the depth of inequality, in all its forms, practiced in South Africa of the day; scholars of Sobukwe corroborate this vision. I had the exceptional privilege to spend several hours in the company of Robert Sobukwe, in Galeshewe, outside Kimberley in 1975. I had facilitated a meeting between him and a visiting Amnesty International leader. Some in the PAC may have taken the view: if they vanquish us we must vanquish them, but that is precisely the dangerous short-cut outcome Sobukwe, did not subscribe to. Admittedly tactics don't always lead to stated goals.

A complementary view was espoused by Steve Biko, Barney Pityana and those in the Black Consciousness Movement. Once more, I was privileged to work with Steve twice, once as fellow students in NUSAS before SASO had to be formed, and a second time when Beyers Naudé helped facilitate the Black Community Programme (BCP) under the SPRO-CAS II programme. This was in 1972 - the same time when Beyers invited me to help build a White Community Programme. Beyers

and a small number of whites had understood and internalized the BC message. We believed it correct that white dominance and patronage and limited vision was such that a free and independent space for Black aspirations had to be created. Accordingly, the Christian Institute facilitated funds and facilities (because it still had the connections) but all organisation, management, governance and accountability was left to the Black governing structure Steve and others wanted - it was a step to overcome the past with all its control mechanisms. The BCP and WCP staff met periodically to coordinate our reports to overseas funders. For more on this watch YouTube: The Cry of Reason - Beyers Naudé.

Fast forward to 1990

Despite the constraints a negotiated settlement imposed on the ANC and its allies in the UDF and with support from progressive clergy, our democracy today ensures we are a modern secular state with, importantly, its Bill of Rights. This is far-sighted and speaks to something our colonizers could not and did not conceive; instead it speaks to people whose 'long walk to freedom' encompasses a deeper all-embracing humanity unavoidable in a shrinking world in which we all rub shoulders, much more than in biblical times.

But not all believe in this. The Christian Evangelicals (I suspect in the main) are active proponents, also here in South Africa, who misuse their Bible and are the source of supremacy and exclusion of the 'other'. Why raise this here? I listened to Ilan Pape visiting UCT some years ago. His contention: Israel, or Palestine, can only hope for peace if a future state is framed as a secular state that provides equal rights for all. The aggressive acts to vanquish the holy sites of the 'others' is reactionary and a hopeless cause of ever-recurring strife. Jew, Muslim and Christian, in the Eastern Mediterranean contestation need secular authority if we have any hope for peace and co-existence.

Oh, if only we could rid ourselves of the primitive desires of 'because you want to vanquish me, I shall vanquish you'. As one who has never identified with religion (even in solitary confinement in a Pretoria prison in 1975, the Bible remained a history book for me) I expect all the decent many religious people, from all three of these religions, I implore you, to do more, much more, to stop those who invoke war in your name.

After religion

Socialists, communists and all who believe in equality between all people's also urgently need a new voice that makes it clear that the religious Empires, where intersect with the evil of capitalism, are the enemy for they defend inequality.

Imperial U(SA),Nationalists, or religious (and religious inspired) warfare by definition excludes class as a measure between rich and poor. Obviously I am not advocating or eulogizing countries that misused class as a mobilizing force for unaccountable power.

What South Africans must protect right now

We enjoy freedom of the press to this day, unlike in the USA, the UK, most of Europe today. I thought the Terrorism Act, under which I was detained in 1975, exactly 50 years ago, was an Apartheid creation. Now the UK has a law by such name which is used to stop pro-Palestine opinion to be expressed. The USA and Germany are similarly restrictive.

~~The limits to our 'system' are the executive - crooked, lazy, short on capacity, big on capitalist avarice, which ironically is no longer white but white and black. And when inequality, poverty and alienation finally bursts into rebellion the rich will simply leave, with their capital - leaving the rest of us to re-build a better state. But that is also not what I want to debate here.~~

Palestine.

For the past two years I spend once or twice a week on a picket line waving a Palestine flag and Kaffiyeh around my shoulders. I do this as my, small as it is, action to not do nothing. But I also influence others to join me or to debate with me. The action has also built a new community of people in our area that breaks the social lines that still define SA and it is building a new young group of politically aware people. The Palestine demo does not exclude the struggles of the people of Swaziland, Congo, Sudan, Sahel and elsewhere. Palestine however stands out, as the most unequal struggle where the old imperial order tests it remote-control destruction; it is this industrialized killing that will engage historians in time to come.

Solidarity

In 1969, with 350 (white) students we marched from the Wits campus to John Vorster Square in downtown Johannesburg, demanding the release of Winnie Mandela and 21 others, detained without charge and subjected to torture. The leaders of the march were charged under the Riotous Assemblies Act. Now having a criminal record, I became a special object of interest of the Special Branch Police (SB). The police state was in full swing. Colliding with the Commissions Act, the Suppression of Communism Act and finally the Terrorism Act followed. Then came fifteen years of exile.

Further aspects of solidarity

From afar, I can but show solidarity - but by doing so I also act to politicize those around me, however small and indirect my effect is.

If I stand for the rights of Palestinians I in no way whatsoever tell them how to conduct their struggle.

From afar I am not the judge. As a South African I must convince others, not least, those in Government, that I am part of a vibrant civil society they must reflect.

As it is, the SA Government has acted positively, but civil society must continue to push so that those like the Zionist lobby and Christian Zionist lobby ,don't make their preference prevail.

In South Africa solidarity by Whites with the oppressed Black majority during the struggle, required an awakening that Steve Biko made real for me.

Ultimately this meant that the credibility of solidarity had to be the measure by which I accepted the same risk that the oppressed person fighting for their freedom, faced.

Armed struggle is not justified at all times. It applies when all other means of protest and resistance are outlawed, or the opposition is exiled or imprisoned. That applied in SA from 1960 onwards when the ANC and PAC were outlawed. People like Beyers Naudé found empathy with this only once he was denied all other means of influencing others.

End.

"As has happened in other countries, at other times, Israel will be able to confront its crimes only if it is forced to pay a high price for them, not thanks to a process of introspection. Only at that point will the walls of denial begin to crack. For that to happen, the US and European powers will have to snap out of their own apparent denial of what they surely know is happening on the ground. As signatories of the UN Genocide Convention, it is their obligation, and as the presumed protectors of the rule of international law and human rights, it is their duty. As long as they do not act, they will have been complicit in this horror, as well as in its denial", written by Omar Bartov - Israel. Words that compare with a frequent call Beyers Naudé made during our struggle.